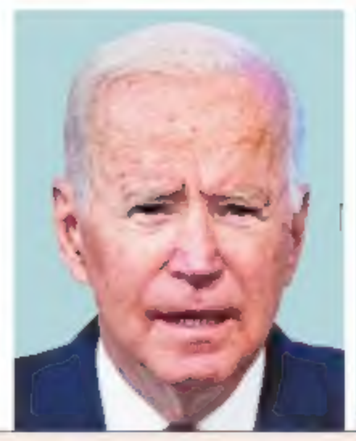
THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

BENGALURU • WEDNESDAY • APRIL 26, 2023 • ₹9.00 • PAGES 18 • LATE CITY EDITION



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BIDEN CONFIRMS HE IS RUNNING FOR RE-ELECTION NEXT YEAR

US President Joe Biden and his deputy Kamala Harris on Tuesday launched their campaign for 2024 presidential election

FRIENDS AND FOES CONCERNED OVER HIS AGE

The pitch for Biden's reelection campaign is 'Let's finish the job'. At present, he has no serious challengers within the Democratic party though many, including friends and foes, have raised concerns about his age, and opinion polls show most Americans don't want him to run again. At 80, he is already the oldest person to serve as US president | **P11**

IT COULD BE BIDEN VS TRUMP AGAIN

- Donald Trump, mired in multiple legal woes, has also confirmed he's running, and experts predict a possible Biden vs Trump clash again
- Biden released a short video attacking Trump over the 2021 attack on the US Capitol building by his supporters. Brushing aside concerns of age, Biden has cast his reelection bid as a "fight for democracy"

70%

AMERICANS DON'T WANT BIDEN TO RUN AGAIN AS PER AN NBC NEWS POLL

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EXPRESS READ

Five-time Punjab CM Parkash Singh Badal dies

Chandigarh: Five-time Punjab chief minister and Shiromani Akali Dal patriarch Parkash Singh Badal, known for his winsome humility and strong rural roots, passed away on Tuesday. He was 95. Badal, who had not been keeping well, was admitted to Mohali's Fortis Hospital over a week ago after he complained of uneasiness in breathing. **P9**

5 of family from B'luru drown in Mandya canal

Mysuru: Five persons of a family drowned in the Visvesvaraya Canal at Doddakothagere village in Mandya taluk on Tuesday. They hailed from Neelasandra in Bengaluru. The family was spending time near the canal when one of them fell into it. The others jumped to save the family member but all drowned. **P3**

Activist and entertainer Harry Belafonte no more

New York: Harry Belafonte, the civil rights and entertainment giant, who began as a groundbreaking actor and singer and became an activist, humanitarian and conscience of the world, passed away on Tuesday. He was 96. Belafonte died of congestive heart failure at his New York home with his wife Pamela by his side. **P11**

'No recruitment based on new quota matrix'

State assures SC it won't proceed with matter till May 9

SHRUTI KAKKAR @ New Delhi

KARNATAKA government on Tuesday assured the Supreme Court that it would not make any appointments or admissions on the basis of its March 27 order scrapping 4% reservation granted to Muslims under the OBC quota, till May 9, 2023.

According to the order, Muslims, who were in category 2B, were moved to the 10% Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) quota pool and their 4% reservation had to be distributed equally between the dominant Vokkaliga and Lingayat communities.

Solicitor General (SG) Tushar Mehta submitted before a bench of Justices KM Joseph and BV Nagarathna that the assurance would hold the field till the next date of hearing. "The affidavit is ready. However, I am before the constitution bench today. Can this be taken up next week?" Mehta submitted.

Objecting to the adjournment sought by the state government, senior advocate Dushyant Dave, appearing for petitioner Ghulam Rasool, said, "This is the fourth adjournment. This is a matter of great importance and concerns the rights of the socially and educationally backward community here."

On SG's suggestion of adjourning the matter to May 9, the senior counsel said that the assurance of not acting on the order was of no help. "That is too late. One more adjournment and summer vacation will start. The quota has been scrapped altogether and it has been brought to zero. Mr Mehta's statement only says that they will not make any new admissions or appointments on the basis of the recent government order. Only if they say that as per the 2002 notifications, the reservation will continue, we will not have any problem."

Responding to Dave's contention and in an attempt to urge the bench to adjourn the pleas, Mehta said, "There is nothing under the sleeves in making the statement. When I say that the impugned order will not be implemented, it means the old order will continue."

Satisfied with the assurance, the bench said, "The SG has assured that the earlier submission will continue till the next date of hearing." **P10**

Wrestlers' plea: Delhi govt gets SC notice

The Supreme Court on Tuesday issued notices to the Delhi government and others on a plea by seven women wrestlers alleging non-registration of an FIR on their sexual harassment allegations against WFI president Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh. The bench said there are serious allegations in the petition by the wrestlers. The matter requires consideration by this court. **REPORT: P9**

A woman greets Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi at a rally in T Narsipur, Mysuru district, on Tuesday | EXPRESS

Priyanka: 2023 polls will decide K'taka's future

K SHIVA KUMAR @Mysuru

COUNTERING the BJP efforts to turn the Assembly polls into a Modi vs the rest narrative, Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Tuesday termed the 2023 elections a crucial one which will decide the future of Karnataka and root out the "corrupt" regime.

Priyanka kick-started her campaign at T Narsipur and Hanur in Chamarajanagar district, where she invoked Kannada pride and appealed to the people not to get swayed by BJP's attempts to divert attention from core issues such as corruption and development.

Accusing the BJP government of looting Rs 1.5 lakh crore in the state, she said with this money 30 lakh houses or 750-km metro line could have been built.

During the BJP rule in the state, chief ministers got changed, cabinet expansion never happened while contractors accused those in the government of collecting 40% commission to clear their bills. Some contractors committed suicide and the contractors' association even wrote to the PM about this. However, no action was taken, she alleged and referred to the PSI recruitment scam and seizure of Rs 8 crore from the son of a BJP MLA. **CONTINUED ON: P4**

Communal issues take backseat in state's coast

> If we rake up such issues (communal) now, people will take us to task
>
> Ravishankar Mijar, BJP leader

VINCENT D'SOUZA @ Mangaluru

UNLIKE previous elections, communal issues have taken a backseat in coastal Karnataka, which is known as the hotbed of communal politics, in the 2023 Assembly polls.

Sources in BJP and Congress said that their parties are not raking up communal issues this time as part of their strategies.

Both parties are instead focusing on development issues to win over voters in this communally sensitive region.

BJP, which was in Opposition in 2018, focused on the killings of Vishwa Hindu Parishad leader D Kuttappa, Paresh Mesta and others which took place during the Siddaramaiah regime. However, this strategy clicked and the saffron party almost swept the coastal region then.

However, the killings of BJP workers Harsha in Shivamogga and Praveen Nettaru in Dakshina Kannada find no mention in the party's campaign this time. **CONTINUED ON: P4**

Indians wait in line to board INS Sumedha at Port Sudan on Tuesday | AFP

278 Indians from Sudan headed to Jeddah

YESHI SELI @ New Delhi

THE first batch of 278 Indians was evacuated from war-hit Sudan on Tuesday and taken to Jeddah in Saudi Arabia on board the Indian naval vessel INS Sumedha as part of 'Operation Kaveri'.

The evacuation from Port Sudan came hours after the US negotiated a 72-hour ceasefire in Sudan, where a conflict has been raging since April 15 with the country's army and its main paramilitary force vying for power.

"The first batch of Indians evacuated from Sudan port have boarded INS Sumedha and are headed to Jeddah. There are 278 Indians on board this ship and there are close to 250 more who will be ferried to Jeddah," the Ministry of External Affairs said in a statement. India has set up a control room in Jeddah to help with the evacuation.

V Muraleedharan, Minister of State for External Affairs, reached the Saudi port city to review the arrangements.

"The team is in full readiness on the ground. I have inspected transit facility at Jeddah where Indians evacuated from Sudan will be received and put up briefly before travel to India. It is fully equipped including with mattresses, provisions, fresh meals, toilets, medical facilities, Wifi," he tweeted.

Late in the night, an IAF C-130J aircraft landed in Port Sudan to speed up the evacuation process. According to reports, the IAF joined the operation after assessing the ground situation. Besides, naval warship INS Teg is also in Port Sudan.

"INS Teg joins #OperationKaveri. Arrives at Port Sudan with additional officials and essential relief supplies for stranded Indians. Will boost ongoing evacuation efforts," MEA spokesperson Arindam Bagchi tweeted. **P5**

CBI's 2nd chargesheet names Sisodia, 3 others

AMIT MUKHERJEE @ New Delhi

THE Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Tuesday filed the second chargesheet naming former Delhi deputy CM Manish Sisodia in the excise policy scam case.

Apart from Sisodia, the second chargesheet — technically the first supplementary one in the case — filed at special judge M K Nagpal's court names Arjun Pandey, Amandeep Dhal, owner of Brindco Spirits, and Hyderabad-based chartered accountant Buchi Babu Gorantla.

Special Judge M K Nagpal fixed May 12 for considering the chargesheet after the CBI submitted that the prosecution sanction against Sisodia has already been procured from competent authorities.

Arjun Pandey's name figured in the course of investigation along with that of co-accused turned informer Dinesh Arora, who was allegedly closely associated with the AAP and was actively involved in 'managing' and 'diverting' the illegal kickbacks from liquor traders — referred to as South Group traders — who benefitted from the Delhi excise policy that was allegedly tweaked in their favour.

While the traders allegedly got windfall gains, the Delhi government lost huge revenues due to the tweaks in the policy. The CBI alleged that Buchi Babu played a key role by representing the South Group in the Delhi liquor scam. Buchi Babu, who is currently out on bail, is said to be the former auditor of Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao's daughter K Kavitha. The CBI, which arrested Sisodia on February 26 for non-cooperation, had filed the first chargesheet on November 25, naming seven accused.

Decision on bail today

The special court is likely to deliver on Wednesday its order on the bail application of AAP leader Manish Sisodia in a money laundering case related to the excise scam

POOR REPRESENTATION

Are men shy of seeing women in power?

NAMRATA SINGWANI AND PURAN CHOUDHARY @ Bengaluru

REPRESENTATION of women in Karnataka's political spectrum remains low. The number of women candidates this year has reduced to 185 from 219 in the 2018 elections.

As per data from the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) of Karnataka, there are 5.05 crore voters in the state, and of them, 2.50 crore are women. Yet, there aren't enough women candidates in the Legislative Assembly, according to experts. The highest number of women members seen in the Assembly was 18 in 1962.

Sandeep Shastri, national coordinator of Lokniti Network, said, "Men are considered more winnable by political parties, masking their insecurities of seeing women leaders in positions of power. However, there is no data to back the notion that men have higher chances of winning elections."

Analysts said women themselves refrain from being in the public eye, fearing that their image may get tarnished. Parties are keen only on votes of women, but not having them as leaders. The patriarchal system in all parties showcases a sense of fear in them of losing their position to women in case they come to power, said Prof Shastri. **CONTINUED ON: P2**

WOMEN IN ASSEMBLY POLLS

Year	Candidates
2013	170
2018	219
2023	185

IN BENGALURU

385 Total candidates

38 Women candidates

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